

Minority parties will receive nothing under this law. Today there is not a single minority party who can meet the eligibility requirements. The major party politicians have simply turned the Federal Treasury into their collective campaign chest (in addition to leaving a thousand loopholes for the usual rich backers and corporate interests to spend millions more buying the candidate of their choice).

Is this what free elections are all about? A media circus between candidates from almost identical parties paid for out of the public treasury? Have the Democratic and Republican party hacks who are leading this attack on the free ballot solved the nation's problems and therefore deserve to exclude all other views from the political arena? Does democracy mean a choice between a Democrat who represents capitalist interests and a Republican who represents capitalist interests?

THERE IS A REAL ALTERNATIVE

The Socialist Labor Party says no. Based on their performance over many decades, the American people know by now what the major parties have to offer—more of the same. The SLP believes the deepening seriousness of our country's problems requires revolutionary ideas and revolutionary solutions.

Americans were once proud that the nation's political process was open to all ideas and that even the most revolutionary alternative could be peacefully submitted to the American people. If access to the ballot is locked up tight, if it is given only to the entrenched capitalist parties who bring their empty promises to the voters each year, then American elections will be nothing more than hollow formalities that change nothing.

Only by opening up the ballot to new ideas, new alternatives, and new programs can the American political process once more become a weapon in the hands of a people struggling to solve the problems they face.

CALIFORNIA VOTERS

Prohibitive signature requirements keep the Socialist Labor Party off the ballot in California, but you can vote for the SLP's candidates:

President	Jules Levin
Vice President	Connie Blomen
U.S. Senator	Robert Bills

- On voting machines, lift the cover of numbered slot for each office and write in SLP candidate's name.

- On punch-card voting system, write the title of the office and the SLP candidate's name in the blank spaces provided for that purpose on the write-in ballot envelope.

NOTE: You can take this leaflet with you to the polls for voting purposes.

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- ☐ Send me more about the SLP campaign.
- ☐ I want to volunteer for SLP campaign work.
- ☐ Send me a free copy of the SLP's official journal, the Weekly People.

Name

Address

City State Zip

TFE-CA

"... YOU WILL HEAR THE VIEWS OF EVERY CANDIDATE WHO IS READY, WILLING AND ABLE TO SPEAK."



A Socialist Labor Party Statement

The Threat to Free Elections

The right of the people to freely elect their government has always been the proudest boast of American democracy. What many Americans don't know is that this right is under severe attack.

Free elections mean, above all, a free ballot—giving the people a chance to nominate candidates of their choice, to hear the different positions of those running for office, and to have all political views represented at the polls. Such a free ballot does not exist in the United States today.

In each of the 50 states, only the major politi-

cal machines of the rich and powerful, the Democratic and Republican parties, are automatically placed on the ballot. All minority parties—in other words, all those aside from the two ruling parties which stand for essentially the same thing—face the most stringent ballot laws in the various states.

These discriminatory laws have been made more and more restrictive, and so more effective in keeping minority parties off the American ballot at the very time the nation's social problems call for fresh ideas and new solutions.

What are some of the requirements that minority parties must meet just to gain a place on the ballot, just to get a chance to offer alternatives to the major party programs?

AN OBSTACLE COURSE

In California, a minority party must gather over 630,000 signatures on petitions simply to be included on the ballot. In Georgia, a minority party needs 104,000 signatures for a ballot slot; in Massachusetts nearly 38,000; in Pennsylvania about 30,000 and so on throughout the country.

In each case, these are the minimum figures. In order to protect themselves from the disqualification of names by bureaucratic election boards (staffed by Republicans and Democrats who want no challengers), minority parties must often gather twice

the minimum number of signatures.

In other words, while the major parties of rich capitalists and politicians are given the top ballot slots automatically, minority parties, with fewer funds and smaller numbers, must make tremendous efforts even before the campaign starts, just to qualify for the right to participate in what is supposed to be a free and open election.

LEGAL TECHNICALITIES

Even after minority parties have successfully made these massive and expensive petition drives, they are not assured ballot spots. Many legal roadblocks remain. Time after time the arbitrary interpretation and application of ballot law technicalities has pushed them off the ballot or disqualified their petitions. For example:

- In New York, minority party nominating petitions are repeatedly subjected to random challenges charging every conceivable violation in the hope that at least one technical deficiency will be discovered to invalidate the petitions. The tactic has been used successfully many times.

- In Indiana the SLP was thrown off the ballot in 1968 when a covering affidavit that had been accepted for 25 years as a valid compliance with the law was suddenly declared "improperly worded."

- In state after state, the Socialist Labor Party must meet the harsh requirements of a "new party" as defined by law, even though the SLP has participated in every presidential campaign since 1892!

PRIVATE CLUB

These repressive laws, with their incredibly complex and arbitrary specifications, have absolutely no constructive purpose. Their only effect is to suppress minority party views and preserve the major party lock on the ballot. They make a complete mockery of free elections, which should give the people the widest choice, not a selection restricted by regulations enacted by the

very politicians running for re-election.

Restrictive ballot laws are by no means the only growing threat to free elections in the United States. There are others just as ominous.

MEDIA BLACKOUT

With each year, political campaigns are more and more decided by access to the media, particularly radio and TV. But the corporate broadcasters, who make their profit by exploiting public airwaves, consistently refuse to cover any activities but those of the major party candidates—candidates who represent the same ruling-class interests as the broadcasting corporations themselves.

The one slight check on this power of the media to determine who the American voters will hear in political campaigns was a modest "equal time" clause in the Federal Communications Act. Supposedly the equal time clause was to provide a chance for all views to be heard.

But the broadcasters, with the help of Congress and the Federal Communications Commission, have steadily eroded the equal time law. Today it is virtually dead, leaving minority party candidates barred from the most important means of modern communication, and the American people flooded with an endless stream of pro-Democratic and pro-Republican propaganda.

PUBLIC FUNDS FOR THE RICH

In the last two years a new source of attacks on free elections has emerged. The Federal government has gone so far as to literally pay for the presidential campaigns of the major parties with funds out of the Federal Treasury. Under the Federal Election Campaign Reform Act of 1974, each of the major party candidates is eligible for up to \$5 million to run primary campaigns, and \$20 million will go to each of the major party nominees. The Democrats and Republicans—who passed this law to line their own pockets—will even receive \$2 million to pay for their national conventions.

